



Yeshiva University

Office of the President

My Dear Friends,

I hope this note finds you well.

As we begin the excitement of opening our new semester, I am pleased to share with you some reflections from our students about their intercession experiences.

As the flagship Jewish university, we understand that the core of our students' identity is our Torah and Torah values. Our education at YU is designed to touch their souls and expand their horizons. For being deeply rooted in our faith and tradition not only fills one's life with great meaning and purpose, it also opens enormous opportunities.

With their stellar character and commitment to Am Yisrael, our students are primed to take their place amongst the leadership of Klal Yisrael. And with their unique position in this world as serious Jews who are role models of commitment, they are uniquely placed to develop a global network to further their success and impact the future.

This intercession, cohorts of our students studied abroad in designed trips to broaden and enrich their education. From Rome to Morocco to Jerusalem, our students travelled during their break to create the connections, deepen their historical consciousness and position themselves for impactful futures.

I was overjoyed to be with our students on these trips and left even more encouraged about the Jewish future, knowing that it is being left in their hands.



Click [link](#) or on the image above to watch the video.

I am pleased to share with you below some of our student reflections from their journeys.

My warmest wishes,

Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman
President, Yeshiva University

“This past winter break, I had the privilege to go to Morocco with the Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks-Herenstein Center for Values and Leadership. This trip was indeed one designed for leaders. It broadened our understanding of the world through firsthand experiences with a Muslim culture and the Moroccan Arab population that has a unique history of deep relationships with the Jewish people. More specifically, each of us were given leadership roles throughout the week, whether it was to share a Dvar Torah, prepare a team building activity, or share a Morocco moment. All of us were certainly taken out of our comfort zones in our own ways through these roles, which is the epitome of what a leader faces — challenge and discomfort. Looking back, these roles, although initially bringing discomfort, ultimately shaped us into stronger leaders of the Jewish future and will be the driving force in making change for our greater YU community. We as a group discussed an array of ways we can give over our experiences in Morocco to our

classmates, mentors, Rebbeim, and professors through our leadership skills we have acquired throughout this trip.”

Sara Elyassian SCW '25

“Before leaving on our trip to Rome, the natural expectation was that the event would be a classic academic seminar, synthesizing Torah and Western thought in classic Straus Center fashion. But the trip turned out to be much more than that. While, of course, the lectures delivered by the Straus professors over the trip proved to be both illuminating and enlightening, they also served as pivotal reminders of the storied Jewish heritage that cannot be forgotten. We were also able to daven mincha both in the Colosseum, which told the story of the Second Beis HaMikdash, and at the Campo dei Fiori, the site of the 1553 Burning of the Talmud. Both instances were incredibly poignant, bearing witness to the failure of the intended destruction of Jewish continuity. The divrei Torah given by the Straus Scholars at the various meals demonstrated that the Jewish future is not only alive and well in today’s world, but keen and eager to help serve as the leaders of tomorrow that YU prides itself on producing. This trip truly served as a testament that being deeply rooted in Torah values yet forward focused to encounter the challenges and opportunities of our times is not merely a trite cliché but in fact a serious belief of Yeshiva University, complete with both faculty and students who continue to embody these values, each and every day.”

Yonathan Kurtz YC '23

“The JSS Israel trip was truly an inspiring journey. We were led by Rabbi Jon Green and Aish staff who guided 16 students to learn spiritually at Yeshivat Aish Hatorah and to experience Israeli culture. At the start of the trip, some students knew one another but over the course of the trip everyone was able to bond with each other and form lasting friendships through the numerous activities and learning at Aish. This trip was the first time in Israel for many of the students. When we first got to Aish, we were all amazed by the beautiful location right by the Kotel where we prayed every day. During the mornings, we had seminars from different Aish Rabbis about the depth and beauty of the Torah. These inspiring seminars helped to solidify my connection to Judaism. In addition to these seminars, we had the opportunity to travel around Israel to visit significant sites in Israel. For example, we went to the Maarat HaMachpelah, where we visited the resting place of our Patriarchs. This was an extremely special place to be and pray Mincha. This trip was deeply meaningful to me as I was able to grow in my Judaism and form new and deeper friendships with everyone on the trip.”

Gabriel Factor '25

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